August 2019 Executive Report

Ends Statements 2016 – 2021:

1. [Within] The people of First Unitarian Church, of all ages and backgrounds, connect in a transformative, authentic, liberal religious experience. We:

- **Grow spiritually, emotionally, socially and ethically.**
  - Tracy Beck met with Aging to Saging leads Bob Henderson and Walter Pearson to talk about the target audience for their programs. They have constructed a survey of the 90 or so folks from age 55-70 in the church who might be targets for programs that have a retirement focus.
  - High School Youth Group is considering a new meeting time other than Sunday evenings. One possibility is Sunday morning at 11 am. The goal for a time change is not only to get more youth involved at a more convenient time, but to also invite the high school youth to be present during times other church activities are happening so they are more visible.

- **Explore and experience what it means to be human.**
  - Our Whole Lives for grades 7 and grade 5 will be offered this fall. (Grade 7 is year-long) Ben Spadt, Elaine Imlau, Chelsea Hayes and Kim Gunnes will teach the grade 7 section. Ken McCann and Wendy Hoogeveen will teach grade 5. In the church Our Whole Lives policy, class size is described. Due to feedback from the two grade 5/6 2018-19 classes, we will begin to cap that age group at 8 participants. The policy will now read: Class Sizes 1. Our Whole Lives classes should ideally be taught with approximately 8-12 participants at the beginning of the class. UCDSM will cap OWL grade 7 classes at 12 participants and OWL grade 5/6 classes at 8 participants with priority given to UCDSM member families.
  - Anne Stamper and Chelsea Hayes will attend an Our Whole Lives training in the Chicagoland area in September. Due to people moving, leaving the church, or unable to teach on Wednesday evenings, the church needs a new group of people trained in all levels of Our Whole Lives (Elementary and Grades 7-9 are most significantly needed sections). A training in the Des Moines area has not been held for at least 3 years. It costs approximately $4000/level to hold an OWL training. It is about $1000 to get a member trained in the OWL curriculum. If a training is held in Des Moines, at least 7 people can be trained at a time. This is significantly more efficient. A budget line item for the 2020-21 year must include funds for an Our Whole Lives training. Planning a Facilitator Training for Our Whole Lives also takes a significant amount of time (approximately 80+ hours) for the Director of Faith Formation.

- **Cultivate compassion toward ourselves and others.**
  - The Transgender Action Group met and reserved space on September 15 in room 105 after the second service for a trans 101 training about Pronoun etiquette and stories from the trans community. The group hopes this will help the church cultivate compassion toward one another and the trans community.
• Develop our Unitarian Universalist identities.
  o Children, youth and adult programming is being designed for the 2019-20 year. Due to Rev. Amy’s arrival on August 1, the programming booklet/information will be distributed later than in the past. Most programming will begin mid-late September. Included will be adult programs, 2 Wellspring groups, Soul Matters (most likely being renamed Circle groups to be more easily recognized), both Sunday and Wednesday children/youth programming, OWL grade 7, OWL grade 5 and Coming of Age.
  o Soul Matters as it has been named in the past will now be named “Circle Groups.” The same curriculum and format will be used. Tracy Beck took a class about small groups and how to grow and sustain them and discovered that groups should be named something simple, concise, easy to understand and not too full of “church” language. Circle Groups was one of the suggestions. Circle Group facilitators are being recruited with hopes of beginning curriculum at the end of September.

2. [Among] The people of First Unitarian Church connect in community to support one another and honor the web of life. We:
  • Ask for and receive loving presence from one another, especially in times of joy, sorrow and transition.
    o Tracy Beck shared developmentally appropriate resources and materials for families to talk to their children about recent mass shootings and other upsetting news events for the website and newsletter.
  • Intentionally invite and engage others to grow in community with us.
    o Faith in Action began a new partnership with Urban Bicycle Ministry for the months of July & August. This partnership is new. We are offering weekly (Thursday) opportunities to the congregation to prepare food then deliver to encampments. Gene McCracken indicated via Facebook that noticed another UU Member when he volunteered. Due to utilizing the Urban Bike Ministry portal for volunteers to sign-up we won’t have definitive numbers regarding our volunteer impact within this partnership.
  • Generously share our time, talent, and treasure.
    o FEDS provided and served a meal at the Shelter of Central Iowa on July 15.
  • Maintain a facility and grounds appropriate for our needs and aligned with our values.
    o Chris Jorgensen is organizing a project to redirect water from the main downspout near the east entrance. During periods of very heavy rain, the drainage system can be overwhelmed and water ends up in the storage space by
the chair lift. The intent is to find a way redirect overflow away from the building through the Memorial Garden.

- Al Powers is researching long-term maintenance options for our chair lift.

3. [Beyond] The people of First Unitarian Church nurture justice in the world. We:

- Build authentic partnerships, responding to needs our partners articulate.

  - Members of Transgender Action Group, Immigration Justice group, and other members of First Unitarian worked with Trinity Las Americas, trans community, various local activists, and the immigrant community to host the Lights for Liberty Vigil at the Polk County Jail on July 12th. One of the members, Aidan, provided the microphone and boom stand for the speakers. Meg, Laura, Aidan, Lyra, and other First Unitarian members worked with Trinity Las Americas and local activists to find speakers from the immigrant community and those that work for immigrant justice; they also assisted with sending the press release to notify news agencies. First Unitarian also paid the permit fee to reserve the space at the Polk County Jail from the social justice funds. Trinity Las Americas showed interest in working with us again.

- Show up with passion and enthusiasm to grow our values in the world.

  - Tracy Beck taught the curriculum, “Think about Your Son” - a training to provide participants with the information, motivation, and support to empower our sons to prevent sexual harm in all its forms. This curriculum was created for use by educators and community leaders to help educate and empower parents to make change. Think About Your Son was developed by the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault in collaboration with educator Rhonda Chittenden. 8 participants were in attendance. The curriculum will be offered again this fall.

- Provide leadership and space for civil discourse.

  - In the midst, of detention centers and complex Immigration policy, the Immigration Justice group hosted two (2) book clubs exploring the issue. Book club members dove into “Undocumented” by Aviva Chomsky in either the daytime or evening sessions. While the participants found a bounty of information and new level of understanding, they didn’t find any easy answers.

**Operations. Important information about current operations—**

- The new phone system was upgraded with a module that gives staff the ability to have their voice mail forwarded to their email inbox as a recording. So far, the ministers have this feature setup.

- The kitchen, Rm 103, and the bathrooms were stripped and re-waxed.
• Steve Dressel, who had been the Children’s Music Coordinator this past spring has taken a position elsewhere and is unable to work on Wednesday nights this coming year. A REACH grant of $2,000 was awarded to fund the position. Senior staff will be talking about steps going forward and posting the position.